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## CHRISTIAN AND JEW

From the first century till today, from the days when the believer in Jesus looked upon the Jew as the crucifier of his Lord, and the Jew looked upon the Christian as a follower of the despised Nazarene, there has been mutual antagonism between the Christian and the Jew. Mitigated by neighborly contiguity and the spirit of human kindness, or aggravated by Jewish exaction upon gentile borrower, and Christian persecution of Jewish subjects, it has remained through all the centuries to keep apart the two great bodies of worshipers of Jehovah. Is there any possibility that it should ever be otherwise? Though in Russia persecution of Jews still continues, it is not vain to hope that in all Christian lands it will soon be, as it now is in most, a thing of the past. The grip of financial oppression is no longer exercised by the Jew pre-eminently. The modern Shylock is as often a worshiper in Christian church as in Jewish synagogue. These causes, which have kept alive the mutual antagonism of Jew and gentile, and fanned it into a flame of bitterness, may, in America at least, be counted a thing of the past.

But can the purely religious antagonism ever cease? Perhaps not. But we are interested to call attention to an influence which is at work slowly, but not ineffectually, eating away the barrier that separates the worshipers of Jehovah and bringing them within speaking distance of one another. We mean the historical study of the Bible.

When in times past all expression of religious belief took on the dogmatic form, and when devotion to one's religion was measured by the intensity of the zeal with which one affirmed the tenets of one's sect, and anathematized all who held different views, to be loyal to one's religion was to stand in unalterable opposition to all who professed other dogmas than one's own. Protestant and Roman Catholic were not fellow-Christians, but mutual antagonists and enemies. Still more were Christians and Jews mutually hated and hateful.

But slowly a new condition of things is coming to pass. The historical study of the Bible and of religion has come into being. In this study both Christians and Jews are taking part, many Jews indeed more zealously and earnestly than most Christians.

The Christian desires to know the history of the Jews' religion, both because it belongs to the history of religion, and especially

because out of it sprang his own. Desiring to know not only the Old Testament period, but scarcely less that later period when out of its very bosom Christianity sprang, he not only delves for himself into the Jewish literature of the later pre-Christian centuries and the early Christian centuries, but reads with eagerness modern books expounding this literature, careless whether they be from Jews or gentiles, so only they are the work of honest investigators.

But Jewish students too are interested in the early Christian records. Jesus was a Jewish rabbi. Paul was a disciple of Gamaliel. Dissenters from the orthodoxy of their day they were, to be sure. But that does not exclude them from Jewish history; there are modern dissenters from Jewish orthodoxy too. Founders of a new sect, which became at length a new religion, they were, to be sure. But that makes them not the less but the more interesting to the Jewish student of Jewish history. Men of ability, men of genius, great teachers, great leaders of thought they were. Greatest of all the rabbis—so some modern Jews do not hesitate to characterize Jesus. Why should any Jewish student reading Isaiah and Malachi and the Psalms neglect to read with equal diligence Jesus the prophet of Nazareth?

And so it has come to be a spectacle exciting no special remark when Jewish rabbi and Christian preacher sit side by side in the same classroom, studying together—it may be Isaiah or Malachi, it may be Jesus or Paul. They have come from very different environment, they bring a very different group of preconceptions and prejudices, but they have met on the same platform. They are both seeking to know the facts of history, to see those facts in their true relation; to read aright the history of Israel's religion; to estimate justly the teachings and character and total significance of all the prophets and teachers that made Israel the teacher of the world in religion. Honest students of history cannot forever read the record differently. The historical study of the Bible, aiming not simply at the knowledge of facts, but at the truth that is disclosed in facts, must continually narrow the chasm that separates Jew and gentile, and hasten the day when they shall see eye to eye. And if it does this for Jew and gentile, what shall it not do for Baptist and Methodist, for Protestant and Catholic, for Latin and Greek?